



Diversity Digest

Inside

On the Horizon

Major General

Paul A. Weaver, Jr

Page 2

Operation Diversity

MSgt Lester M. Enoch

Page 3



News From the Field

Page 4



MEOCS Ready For
Millenium

Mickey R. Dansby, Ph.D.

Page 3



Nationwide Pilot Deficit Nets Creative Solutions



Major Elizabeth Kilmeyer, and SMSgt Lou Paris from ANG Recruiting and Major Rod Chandler from the 108th ARW, McGuire AFB New Jersey, look at new pilot recruiting opportunities.

By Major Mary Margaret Ullerich
Deputy Chief, OHRE

The Air National Guard is running out of pilots. The airlines need more pilots. Demographers have told us for several years that the most constant pool of resources from which to recruit is getting smaller, and Dr. Samuel Betances, consultant to many Fortune 500 companies wishing to prepare, promote, and recruit from more minority populations, and the Guard advises that..."White men can't do it alone anymore." This means that we must recruit from many other populations and make sure that minority members are mentored for increased challenges and promotion opportunities. Major Elizabeth Kilmeyer, and SMSgt Lou Paris from ANG Recruiting and Major Rod Chandler from the 108th ARW, McGuire AFB New Jersey, are working together specifically to help the ANG meet that objective. Major Chandler chairs the Military Affairs Committee of the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP). Because he's also a Guard pilot, he made the connection for both organizations. In our interview he said that his 19-1/2 years in the Guard opened the door for him at United Airlines where he flies the Boeing 757 and 767 airframes. He told me about "Ace"; the summer flight academies that the major airlines sponsor for youngsters between ages four-

"Recruiting" continued on page 5



ON THE HORIZON

*By Major General
Paul A. Weaver, Jr.
Director,
Air National Guard*

The next Diversity Education Initiative Train-the Trainer class is on the horizon. It is scheduled from Monday, 27 November through Friday 1 December 2000 in Orlando, Florida. I'll be sending an announcement to your states very shortly that will have all

of the details about selection procedures and registration through your Commander's representative. POC is CMSgt Susan Shonka, email shonkas@fl-arng.ngb.army.mil.

Since implementation of Diversity Education last winter, the Instructors, and State and Wing Human Resources Advisors have collected many ideas from the hundreds of Air National Guard senior leaders who have already attended and given feedback. One of the prevailing suggestions has been to create an eight-hour version as an option for the sixteen-hour class that we're using now. This shorter, revised iteration will be sent to all existing Trainers and given to the new Trainers at the November class.

This is the last issue of the Diversity Digest in this format. From now on, you can read selected features about our Diversity Initiatives each month in the DP Newsletter. You'll be getting relevant articles and information about upcoming events monthly instead of quarterly. Please let us know how you like getting your diversity news in this time and money saving process.

MEOCS Ready for the Millennium

*By Mickey R. Dansby, Ph.D
Director of Research, DEOMI*

The Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey program has been perhaps the most extensive voluntary organizational development survey system ever established.

Since June 1990, almost 7,000 organizations and nearly a million people have participated in DEOMI's MEOCS program.

But even with such an enviable record of success, we at the Directorate of Research of the Defense equal Opportunity Management Institute know that without continuous improvement, we lose our edge and may not meet the needs of our customers into the next millennium.

So we have set a goal to develop a new survey system for a new millennium: MEOCS 2000.

The traditional MEOCS offers several versions, with one appropriate for any organization in the military Services. It also has a dozen or more equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity and organizational effectiveness scales (or factors) on each survey.

The feedback package offers extensive internal comparisons, as well as comparisons to the large database of MEOCS responses across the Services.

The current process is relatively straightforward. The unit commander or agency head requests the survey; an administrator package is mailed to the unit administrator; the survey is administered; and the computerized response sheets are sent back to DEOMI.

Here they are analyzed and a report is returned to the unit commander or agency head.

This process works well for most units. However, the delays caused by mailing can extend the process length by as much as four weeks.

In an age of instant communications, some of our customers are asking why we can't speed up the process and do it electronically.

This is where MEOCS 2000 comes in. In this initiative, we are exploring ways to use technology and speed up the MEOCS process, at least for some users.

We are also taking a look at how we can make the survey more flexible and have even greater potential for customization based on the unit's needs.

Finally, we are seeking to improve the survey itself, so that it causes less reactance (is less intrusive) for those completing the form.

Actions we are considering in each of these areas include:

*Developing new technology versions of the survey(s). Though the technology exists, we have concerns over the present state of computerized survey administration.

Many of our military units do not have computers readily accessible to all members. We don't want there to be an exclusion of unit members who can't readily access computers. In the famous Truman vs. Dewey election, major errors were made in polling, leading to the wrong predication of the winner, simply because they used a telephone poll and at the time many people did not have phones. We don't want to suffer similar errors.

Furthermore, we still have concerns about the confidentiality, security, and integrity of computerized administrations. We will continue to explore this technology as it develops and may be able to offer it to units that have the proper communications infrastructure.

Another new technology we are experimenting with is fax-back administration. This technology is presently available and does not have the same security/integrity problems as computerized administration.

It requires special software and scanner capabilities (which we now have), and seems very promising as a way to reduce the total length of time required to conduct MEOCS. However, because it requires someone in the unit to manually feed the response sheets into a fax machine, it is probably not appropriate for units much larger than 100.

*Making the survey more flexible. One of our key initiatives here is to develop a "cafeteria-style" survey that allows commanders to choose from about 30 different EO/EEO/OE scales, each with about five items.

The commanders could put together a survey that matches their current needs more closely. Of course, we have many technical problems to overcome. With the large number of surveys we do each year (about 1,000), we have to automate that process of analysis and feedback.

"MEOCS" continued on page 5

OPERATION DIVERSITY: At The Forefront of Cultural Awareness

By MSgt Lester M. Enoch
106th Rescue Wing
New York Air National
Guard Recruiter



Although we have come a long way from the days of the Tuskegee Airman, Buffalo Soldiers and 54th Regiment of Massachusetts, there is still a great need for more education and improvement in the area of cultural diversity in the military. As corporate America diversifies its workforce in an effort to do business in the new millennium, so should the Armed Forces. For the purpose of this article, I will make reference to the Air National Guard, which is a reserve component of the Air Force. The National Guard roots date back to 1636, and has gone from the weekend warrior concept to the hundred day a year part time job.

The Air National Guard gets the majority of its support from citizens that reside in the local communities. Because this support comes from local citizens, the cultural makeup of all Air National Guard units should mirror that particular community. For example, the Air National Guard located in Puerto Rico should reflect a high number of Puerto Ricans because of demographics. Overall, the Air National Guard continues to increase its efforts through recruiting to have each and every unit mirror the community in which it is located.

My research has found that, although the numbers on paper show improvement, there seems to be other problems. Diversity is one issue in the military; equal opportunity and racism are others. If equal opportunity is a worthwhile goal, as most Americans believe, it will be achieved through structured outreach, recruitment, training, retention, and promotion - affirmative action, valuing diversity, and managing diversity. Henderson, G. (1994). *Cultural Diversity in the Workplace: Issues and Strategies*.

Over the last ten years, the word diversity has spread throughout the Air National Guard like wildfire. I feel that it has very little to do with sensitivity or understanding cultural differences. The Air National Guard understands diversity as a means of survival. But that's not enough. We need to do more in terms of sensitivity and understanding cultural differences. In 1995, during a national recruiting conference in Tulsa Oklahoma, a guest speaker gave a speech on diversity to over five hundred recruiters, retention managers, human resource advisors and personnel directors. One of the things he said was, we needed to diversify our recruiting and retention staff if we were to have any success in diversifying our organization. Then one black recruiter stood up and said he agreed because he had never seen a white recruiter in Harlem. Needless to

say it got very heated in there and by the end of the first break, half the audience had left. I thought to myself, why are so many people, especially in the business of recruiting, so uncomfortable talking about this subject.

Today, the diverse make-up of the Air National Guard recruiting staff has changed in a big way. Recruiters of all diverse and cultural backgrounds are in the field and in their communities with tremendous success. I believe the increase in minority representation is a direct result of conscious recruiting efforts toward obtaining a representative Guard unit reflective of its community. This effort alone, however, will not allow us to maintain our goal for a diverse organization. In my research, I have compiled data on one Air National Guard unit that will show a potential barrier that can be bad for business. I will also discuss possible solutions and programs that are in effect to help us deal with diversity issues in the workplace.

As I enter my tenth year as a recruiter, I have noticed a trend at my unit. The more minorities and women we bring in, the more we lose. For some reason, they feel as if they do not belong to the Air National Guard family. Some say they feel uncomfortable in certain sections, yet others say the opportunity for advancement is simply beyond their reach. How would you interpret that? This year we lost a total of 7 minorities for unacceptable reasons. Ask any recruiter and they would agree that this is a devastating loss. The Air National Guard is a community organization, and if we do not treat our minorities as part of the family, someone else will. Of the 830 members in my unit, almost all minorities hold positions in the lower ranks. The only exception to this fact is white females.

The Civil Rights Act of 1991, Title II, established a Glass Ceiling Commission to conduct studies and prepare recommendations concerning: (1) eliminating artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities in the workplace, (2) increasing the opportunities and developmental experiences of women and minorities to management and decision-making positions in business.

Table 1.1 shows the overall numbers as they really are.

1996 US CENSUS BUREAU DEMOGRAPHIC ESTIMATES
Nassau and Suffolk Counties = Total population 2,660,285

CAUCASIAN	2,164,385	81.164%
BLACK	201,544	7.557%
HISPANIC	204,388	7.664%
OTHER	89,968	3.373%

The numbers speak for themselves, and although minority representation is improving, a greater effort is needed to ensure minorities get an equal opportunity to obtain key positions within the Air National Guard. Corporations cannot manage attitudes, but they can manage behavior with accountability, rewards, and punishment, as in all other important areas of concern. What gets measured in business gets done, what is not measured is ignored. Jones, E. (1986). "Black managers: The dream deferred." One of the Air National Guard's goals is to mirror the community in which we are located. The best source of statistical information available to us is the U.S. census report. This report gives us the local demographics of our community and it is up to the recruiting staff to find the quality applicants. As our minority representation increases

"Operation Diversity" continued on page 6

News From the Field

HQ Arkansas ANG Sets Diversity Training Pace

*By Master Sgt. Shelby J. Sumner
189th AW Public Affairs*

Headquarters Arkansas Air National Guard set the standard during the May unit training assembly when it held the state's first ANG workforce Diversity Education Initiative Workshop at Little Rock Air Force Base.

The two-day course examined changes in demographics, barriers within organizations and contributions of all groups to the mission. It included videos, class and group exercises, and emphasized student interaction. Eleven members of the Arkansas ANG have been trained to facilitate the course. It was a statewide undertaking as members from headquarters, 189th Airlift Wing, 188th Fighter Wing, 123rd Intelligence Squadron and 223rd Combat Communications Squadron facilitated the class.

The diversity training initiative began in 1992, when the ANG was found to be next to last in underrepresented groups of all the reserve components. The Director of the ANG created a Human Resources Quality Board tasked with solving the problem. The position of Human Resources Advisor was created as a result.

In 1998, Dr. Samuel Betances was contracted to build a diversity program for the ANG with a vision of a more diverse ANG in the 21st century. The goal of the program is to value the uniqueness each member brings to the

organization.

"We must be ready for Workforce 2000 and beyond," Senior Master Sgt. Normal Gilchrest, State Human Resource Advisor said.

Gilchrest is one of 15 Air National Guard members nationwide who were personally trained by Dr. Betances. They, in turn, trained over 600 others from throughout the ANG in Denver late last year.

"Diversity is a readiness concern. It's an issue that will affect the Guard in the future, because the demographics are rapidly changing. Women and other underrepresented groups will make up a much larger portion of the workforce," Gilchrest said.

"It's mission essential that we reach out to the whole community and bring everyone in - to ensure all people are afforded the opportunity to reach their potential. Our future depends on that," Col. Danny R. Smith, 189th Airlift Wing commander said.

"Diversity is a critical issue within the Guard today," he said. "It affects our strength, it's our future. Our unit is in pretty good shape, but we haven't arrived. We're not yet where we want to be," he said.

Brig. Gen. Shelby G. Bryant, Arkansas ANG chief of staff said the class was a reinforcement of a class he had previously attended.

"Our strength is in our diversity," he said. "No one age, sex or race has a monopoly on talent. We are a team and we need to use everyone's talents.

"Female pilots were unheard of when I got in the unit," Bryant said. "but now it's accepted, it's normal, and I think that's great. Things have changed for the better."

The Director of the ANG has suggested that all members receive that training within the next five years. Other classes will be scheduled beginning in August.

*Arkansas Air National Guard Headquarters members attend the first ANG Workforce Diversity Education Initiative Workshop at Little Rock Air Force Base.
Photo by Master Sergeant Shelby J. Sumner*





Dennis Larson Recieves Diversity Award

By Judi Ransom
ITS2, Metro Water Resources Engineering

Dennis Larson is the Principle Engineer for Metro Water Resources Engineering and also the Chief of Engineering at the 133rd Air Wing. In his civilian job he manages 20 full time personnel (consisting of engineers, hydrologists, transportation workers, and an information technology specialist), 3 student workers, and SEEDS intern worker, and 1 rotating graduate engineer. He was recently recognized as an individual contributor to the Minnesota DOT Diversity Program. Winners of this annual award attend a luncheon in their honor.

Dennis has always been very diverse in his hiring practices. His latest hire is a 67-year-old engineer. Other employees include hydrologists from Vietnam and Liberia, an engineer from Jamaica, and a rotating graduate engineer from Ghana. He recently obtained a promotion for a disabled employee.

For the last three years, Dennis has used structured interviews for all hires. He always makes sure that there is at least one member of a protected class on the interview panel and he actively seeks recruits from all over the country.

He has been supportive of the TRAC program by allowing members Della Schall and Lise Walter to participate in teaching students of Patrick Henry High School the merits of working for Mn/DOT Water Resources Engineering.

Dennis treats all of his employees equally - merit awards are based on performance, and he is free to hand out compliments to all who have done a good job. It is standard practice for him to route letters and/or memos (reflecting a job well done) to all of his employees, and his supervisor, Dan Dorgan. This award was especially meaningful to Dennis because he was nominated by his employees.

Women Leading Change for Women of Color

By Rayona Sharpnack

Sonoma County Diversity leads new possibilities to move the needle on the development, promotion and retention of Black, Asian and Hispanic women professionals by spearheading and piloting "Women Leading Change for Women of Color", a workshop in collaboration with Hewlett Packard and Agilent Technologies Global Diversity. This past week, Twenty four exempt, top performing women of color were brought together to unleash their creative spirits, and harness their power to maximize their contribution to their organizations in the midst of change.

The project captured immediate interest by Fast Company magazine and Catalyst, a non-profit research and advisory organization working with business to advance women. Both will be following the progress of the women in attendance. Project champions. Leslie Camino-Markowitz, Sonoma County/WLV Diversity and Ocean Lott, HR staff, have been invited to present on their efforts as the Women in Leadership Summit conference in San Francisco, February 8th, where Gloria Steinem - Author & Editor of Ms. Magazine, Benazir Bhutto - Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mae Jemison - Scientist, Educator, and Astronaut are among the presenters.

Project lead, Ocean Lott effectively brought the program to fruition, and introduced the program to the selected women by raising visibility on the current status of Asian, Black and Hispanic women in corporations as published in the latest Catalyst report, which indicated significant gaps in the advancement of women of

color. Lott's basic premise is, "The best conversation for diversity is in the context of success".

Women from Agilent and HP astounded the facilitators with a level and depth of contribution never experienced in prior offerings of the three-day "breakthrough" leadership class. Although a leadership workshop, the cultural diversity of the women greatly increased everyone's understanding of the complexity brought on by race.

A significant transformation and breakthrough in the class materialized as one third of the women who entered the class, while silently contemplating leaving their company, later completed the sessions by committing to breakthrough business projects that would dramatically impact the success of their organizations, both in process improvement and in direct sales.

Leslie Camino-Markowitz, Sonoma County Diversity Specialist and project sponsor stated, "The immediate return on investment simply on employee replacement cost speak for itself, the results of propelling business breakthrough projects will be seen within the next six months. In addition, the networking among successful women of color is already proving to be a natural, generative and very powerful support and mentorship mechanism."

As the ANG gets ready to launch its formal mentoring process, it will probably reap the same positive results through teamwork and idea sharing as Hewlett Packard and Aligent Technology.

"Recruiting" continued from page 1

teen and eighteen whom would like to fly. "OBAP pilots volunteer their time to teach the kids to fly and maintain a small single engine plane. There were ten camps around the country this year in various locations such as Atlanta, Chicago, and Phoenix. This is all it takes for most of the kids who want to excel in school and take the right classes to get to college and become pilots...for the military and industry"

"Recruiting" continued on page 7

"Operation Diversity" continued from page 3

Table 1.1 UNIT STRENGTH AS OF JANUARY 2000 = 102%

Population	Caucasian Male	Black Male	Hispanic Male	Other Male	Caucasian Female	Black Female	Hispanic Female	Other Female
	616	51	30	17	88	12	13	3
Percentage of the Population	74.2%	6.1%	3.6%	2.0%	10.75%	1.46%	1.56%	0.36%

Totals: Males 85.9% Females 14.13%

Current Rank	Caucasian Male	Black Male	Hispanic Male	Other Male	Caucasian Female	Black Female	Hispanic Female	Other Female
Amn	5	1	0	0	2	1	2	1
A1C	18	4	2	1	8	1	2	0
SrA	98	9	5	6	24	5	2	1
SSgt	158	16	9	3	15	2	4	0
TSgt	110	11	7	0	13	2	2	0
MSgt	101	2	2	2	15	1	1	1
SMSgt	33	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
CMSgt	11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	534	43	26	12	78	12	13	3
2LT	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1LT	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Capt	26	1	2	3	5	0	0	0
Maj	23	6	1	1	4	0	0	0
LTC	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Col	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	82	8	4	5	10	0	0	0

es, the number of minorities in positions of greater responsibility should increase as well. These are the people who will become positive role models in our units. We need to show the minority community that we have changed and that we have a plan for the new millennium that includes all people. The reason why we need to do this is because minorities must make a change as well. Just because the Air National Guard has a plan, does not mean minorities are going to break down our door to get in. A diversity plan needs to be implemented and properly managed at the unit level.

On November 23rd, 1999, CNN reported the results of a survey on race relations in the military. It revealed that approximately 80% of all minorities in the military have experienced racism at least once in their career and that half of all complaints have gone unanswered. Secretary of Defense William Cohen is expected to implement written guidelines that govern racism in the military. The lack of a properly managed plan hurts morale and causes minorities to leave. Organizations behave the way leaders let them behave. If the Air Guard's leadership lets the units behave as they have in the past, they surely will continue to do so. If we leaders change our own behavior; if we leaders accept the role of personal agents of

organizational change; and if we lead by example, the units will change too. Cushman, Michael. (1999, Spring). Destination Diversity: A leadership journey in personal and organizational behavioral change. Diversity Digest. The execution of a successful diversity plan can set the standard not only for the Armed Forces but corporate America as well. My unit is supporting current measures taken by the Air National Guard to ensure they are at the forefront of diversity and cultural awareness.

- ◆ The Year Of Diversity 2002 - setting example for all to follow
- ◆ National Diversity Conference - yearly
- ◆ Human Resource Quality Boards - state and national level
- ◆ Diversity Digest - written publication
- ◆ Human Resource Councils - unit level
- ◆ Diversity Training - available to all members
- ◆ Social Actions - equal military opportunity
- ◆ Human Resource Advisor - direct link to each unit commander
- ◆ Community Liaison Officer - community initiative
- ◆ Recruiting/Retention - increase in recruiting efforts
- ◆ Mentoring Training Program - for those who want to make a

difference

As the Air National Guard diversifies their organization, they must realize that there will be and has been some resistance. Once the Air Guard has diversified their organization, they must see to it that minorities are being treated fairly and that minorities get the same opportunities as everyone else. We can not afford to lose those minorities we already have. They are our role models, future mentors and word of mouth recruiters. Diversity is not just how your organization looks as compared to the community demographics. It's also the level of responsibility given to the members and the positions they hold. These are issues that need to be discussed starting at the top. We must learn to accept one another. I think one reason why we haven't heard discussions on this subject is because of cultural differences. This is why the Air National Guard's plan for diversity training is so important. It should not dictate change, but rather help people understand why changes need to be made. It should also give all members the opportunity to express their feelings as it pertains to not only cultural changes but personal behavior changes as well.

This will be the perfect opportunity to properly educate our members. People support what they help create. Ideally, individuals to be affected by a change should be given an opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of that change. Beckhard, Richard. (1969). Diversity, culture and racism are issues that are extremely important in the workplace today, because if there were no racism, there would be no need for a diversity plan. If everyone looked the same, there would be no need for a diversity plan. If everyone practiced the same values, there would be no need for a diversity plan. This is the most diverse country in the world and its success has been based on the result of its differences. In 2002, we enter the year of diversity. You've seen what my unit looks like and what our plan is. What will yours be?

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"Recruiting" continued from page 5

SMSgt Lou Paris talked about their goal to bring people in to rated positions in both organizations...share the wealth...people in the Air National Guard and the Organization of Black Airline Pilots get to know and help one another because our interests are very mutual." He also reiterated the vision of the Commander in Chief and Major General Weaver that...the ultimate aim across the ANG is to mirror the country and in our units to mirror their communities." Sergeant Paris led me to Major Phil Brown who talked about his success story. Major Brown met Sgt. Paris at an OBAP convention some time ago. He was a separating Navy A-6 Intruder pilot at the time who was beginning a new career with American Airlines. He also wanted to maintain

his military affiliation, so considered the Naval Reserve. Coincidentally, Lt Gen Russell Davis was one of his mentors and convinced him that the Air National Guard was the organization for which he really wanted to fly! Since then he's flown A10's at Battle Creek and then C-130's in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Because of his prior record and experience he was immediately upgraded to an aircraft commander in their new C-130 H-3 model. Major Brown also flies the MD-80 for American Airlines. He has successfully recruited four other African-American pilots into the Guard.

Major Elizabeth Killmeyer is another of our recruiters who is also a member of this recruiting partnership with OBAP. Because of her TDY schedule she was unavailable for comment. To find out more about ACE Summer Flight Academy, you can call Mr. Ron Ussery at (678) 393-1862. For information about OBAP, E-mail Major Chandler at: rodc767@cs.com or call the Air National Guard recruiters at (703) 607-2999. The DSN prefix is 327.

"MEOCS" continued from page 1

Having unique surveys that are not organized the same and that have different scales occurring in different places on the response form creates a processing nightmare. Since much of the MEOCS process is based on custom-designed software, we would have to "retool" dramatically and invest hundreds (if not thousands) of hours into writing new programs.

One compromise that would optimize costs and benefits would be to develop several "standard" versions with a variety of scales and allow the commander to choose the one that best fits his or her needs. For example, one version might emphasize EO, another EEO, and another OE.

* Reducing reactance. In this area, we hope to reduce the emotional response levels from some survey respondents.

Sometimes people believe MEOCS is not "balanced," that it has a "preconceived conclusion," or that it is not "fair" to majority men. These reactions are mostly due to the use of "critical incident" approaches in our current MEOCS versions.

The incidents were collected over a period of years to indicate both negative and positive EO climates. However, many of them are negative and identify white or males as perpetrators of EO offenses.

From a practical standpoint, most incidents do involve whites or males who discriminate against minorities or women. However, we are hoping to create a survey where we can have "neutral tone" items that allow the incidents to be more accurately described and at the same time not offend any group by "accusing" them of causing most EO/EEO problems.

The neutral tone items would be something like: "A Person of another racial-ethnic group made disparaging remarks about members of my racial-ethnic group."

Of course, if phrased this way, it is extremely important that the respondent complete the demographic portion of the survey correctly and completely so we can tell which groups are being discriminated against.

Early tests have shown such items to be valid and reliable, but not as sensitive as the original MEOCS items in detecting problems. We hope to solve these technical difficulties and create MEOCS 2000 as a neutral-tone survey.

As we move into a new millennium, we hope to retain the usefulness, rigor, and quality of the current MEOCS program, yet improve it and make it even more effective. As we continue to improve MEOCS, your feedback is vital to helping us define goals.

Celebrate Diversity

The wind dances through the trees, and I celebrate the diversity of their songs-the rustling of the eucalyptus and cottonwoods, the gentle whisper of the fruit trees, the moaning of the pines, the clattering of the palms. Their dresses are just as diverse- silvery peeling bark and pale round leaves, whitewashed trunks and bright green leaves, dark rough bark and tiny needles, and hard prickly fronds. And the scars! Yet their song is magical, their dress is creative, and the scars do not detract, but only serve to strengthen them.

Trees are the face of Spirit, just as we humans are, yet we have much more tolerance for the trees. Their voices never seem to grate; we hardly notice the scars or whether the curve of the branches are too large or too

small. We celebrate their diversity; we don't expect a palm tree to sound or look or grow like a pine. When trees are young, we brace them against storms and allow them to be exactly who they are by providing the correct fertilizers. If they lose a limb, we tend the wound and protect it, gently encouraging them to heal and grow. And when trees are old, we revere them.

They stand through the pouring rain, the beating sun, and the harsh wind-storms, joyously reaching their arms to embrace all weathers. We allow them to be and we love them as they are.

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DIVERSITY DIGEST

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